



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Consideration of reports of States parties

List of issues in relation to the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Singapore

Addendum

Replies of Singapore to the list of issues* **

[Date received: 15 February 2019]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

** The annexes to the present report are on file with the Secretariat and are available for consultation.
They may also be accessed from the web page of the Committee.

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Preface

1. Every child deserves a good start in life. Singapore is committed to building the best home for our children, where they can grow and thrive in a safe, conducive and nurturing environment.
2. Our children enjoy high standards of living. We provide quality healthcare – infant mortality rate is low, at 2.2 per 1,000 resident live births in 2017. Overall literacy rates are high – more than 96.7% of the primary one school cohort progressed to post-secondary education.
3. We have invested significantly in the interests, welfare and well-being of our children. We have strengthened legislation, systems, and policies to provide them with a good start and better protection. We reviewed legislation beneficial to children, including the Children and Young Persons Act (CYPA), Early Childhood Development Centres Act, the Women’s Charter (WC), the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act (PHTA), and the Penal Code. Work is underway to raise the age limit in the CYPA, thereby expanding statutory protection to include young persons from 16 to 18 years.
4. We have made progress in our ratification of human rights instruments. Recently, Singapore ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) on 27 Nov 2017. Singapore also continues to do well in international benchmarking studies. The World Bank ranked Singapore 1st on its inaugural Human Capital Index in 2018.¹ Save the Children has also ranked Singapore 1st in its 2018 End of Childhood Index.²

Part I

Question 1

Reservations and declarations

5. As stated in paragraph 6 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report, Singapore takes reference from the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the 2011 Concluding Observations in making improvements for our children. Please see paragraphs 7 to 13 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report for some of the areas of improvement.
6. We appreciate and have carefully considered the Committee’s comments relating to Singapore’s declarations and reservations but we are not ready to withdraw any of them. Despite this, we continue to review the declarations and reservations and strive to comply with the intent and spirit of all the CRC provisions.

Question 2

Coordination and national plan of action

7. Please see paragraphs 21 and 22 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report on Singapore’s approach to coordination of children’s rights issues.
8. The Inter-Ministry Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (IMC-CRC) is the key platform that brings together decision makers from relevant government

¹ The Human Capital Index aims to measure the amount of human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by age 18. More information on the Index can be found at www.worldbank.org/en/publication/human-capital.

² The End of Childhood Index looks at the events that rob children of their childhoods and prevent them from reaching their full potential, for example, poor health, malnutrition, exclusion from education, child labour, child marriage, early pregnancy and extreme violence. More information on the Index can be found at <https://campaigns.savethechildren.net/end-of-childhood>.

agencies³ whose work relates to children's rights. The IMC-CRC monitors Singapore's compliance with the Convention, and updates the Cabinet on key decisions and milestones. The Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) is the secretariat to the IMC-CRC.

9. The Inter-Ministry Workgroup on Child Protection (IWCP) is another inter-agency partnership that sets the strategic policy direction for child protection in Singapore. The IWCP defines the roles and responsibilities of various partners in the management of child abuse in Singapore. It is made up of both governmental and non-governmental agencies.⁴

10. Inter-agency partnerships have worked well for us. The deliberation platforms ensure overall alignment on children's rights, and each agency has a clear mandate and responsibility to put into effect changes within its purview.

Question 3

Independent monitoring

11. Please see paragraph 23 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report on independent monitoring. Singapore has various independent monitoring mechanisms in place though we do not have a single national institution as envisaged by the Paris Principles. These avenues are sufficient and take the form of the Review Board for all cases of children and young persons (CYP) placed in our CYP Homes, and the Panel of Advisors (PoA) consisting of individuals from different disciplines and with various expertise in child welfare and development, who advises the Youth Court judge on the best outcome for all cases that go through the Youth Court.

12. Singapore also welcomes independent feedback to improve Singapore's support for our children, and regularly engages private and people sector representatives. Please see paragraph 23 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report.

13. The existing monitoring mechanisms relating to children in Singapore have worked well. While we will continue to monitor the efficiency and appropriateness of the mechanisms within the context of Singapore's national circumstances, we are of the view that it is currently, not necessary for us to establish the institution envisaged in the Paris Principles for us to be able to monitor and implement our obligations under the CRC.

Question 4

Corporate social responsibility

14. Please see paragraph 179 of our 4th and 5th periodic report for protection for children from economic exploitation. All corporations within Singapore are subject to the laws that protect our children. Any contravention is an offence punishable under the law. Singapore's strong statutory safeguards, and low child employment rates ensure our children are protected. As such, Singapore does not have the problem of economic exploitation of children, including child labour.

15. Singapore is committed to our international obligations regarding the employment of children including under the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Please see paragraph 33 of our 4th and 5th Periodic report on our commitment to the ILO Conventions.

³ Agencies include the Attorney General's Chambers, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, Ministry of Communications and Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Law, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Manpower, and Ministry of Social and Family Development.

⁴ Members of the IWCP include Ministry of Social and Family Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Education, Attorney General's Chambers, Singapore Police Force, Ministry of Law, Immigration and Checkpoints Authority, Early Childhood Development Agency, Family Justice Courts, National Council of Social Service, Institute of Mental Health, Child Protection Specialist Centres, and KK Children's and Women's Hospital.

Question 5

Non-discrimination

16. Please see paragraphs 35 to 38 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report on the measures taken to ensure non-discrimination.
17. Singapore demonstrates our commitment to equality by making progress through our international commitments. Please see paragraph 4 above.
18. Singapore has done well in protecting our women and girls from discrimination, ranking 12th out of 160 countries on the Gender Inequality Index with a score of 0.067 in 2017.

Question 6

Best interests of the child

19. Please see paragraphs 15 to 20 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report on the measures taken to integrate the best interest of the child in national legislation, as well as judicial and administrative proceedings and all decisions concerning children.

Best interests of the child in national legislation, judicial and administrative proceedings and decisions

Legislation

20. The CYPA enshrines the best interests of CYP as the “first and paramount consideration”. The CYPA governs the protection and rehabilitation of children under 16 years. It allows the Youth Court to rehabilitate juvenile offenders, and spells out community-based restorative options such as community service. The CYPA provides for parental involvement in the care, protection and rehabilitation of CYPs. Parents may be mandated to attend programmes to improve the parent-child relationship.
21. The CYPA is under review, and the proposals are made available on REACH (Reaching Everyone for Active Citizenry at Home)⁵ for public consultation. Work is in progress to:
 - (a) Raise the age limit of a CYP in need of care and protection or rehabilitation from 16 years to 18 years. This would bring the age limit of a CYP under the CYPA into alignment with the age of a child under the UNCRC;
 - (b) Enhance care and protection of a CYP. Every child deserves the right to grow up in a safe environment. For children who are unlikely to be able to reside safely with their families, we intend to put in place legislation to ensure stable long-term care arrangements are made to safeguard their rights to development. Because violence is not tolerated, we intend to raise the penalties for child abuse;
 - (c) Emphasise community-based care and the role of family for CYPs who are beyond parental control. Our review of the Beyond Parental Control (BPC) regime has culminated in proposed amendments to the CYPA. Please see paragraphs 52 and 53 below;
 - (d) Allow for more effective management of CYPs in our residential facilities. Safety is paramount within our residential facilities. We will be equipping the facilities to protect CYPs who may harm themselves or fellow CYPs.
22. We have reviewed and proposed amendments to the Penal Code to ensure our criminal laws are relevant and up-to-date. The proposed amendments are to be debated in Parliament in 2019 and includes:

⁵ REACH is an online consultation portal. This is an accessible and user-friendly avenue for the public to comment on government policies and initiatives.

- (a) Raising the maximum age of the victim for all sexual offences, where there is an element of exploitation, from 16 to 18 years;
- (b) Expanding the definition of “sexual services” for provisions involving commercial sex to include non-penetrative sexual activity;
- (c) Doubling of punishments for offences committed against children under 14 years;
- (d) Introduction of new offences to prevent fatal child abuse, to require a caregiver to take reasonable steps to prevent future or ongoing abuse, where there is actual or constructive knowledge of risk of physical or sexual abuse to the child;
- (e) Introduction of new offence of exploitative penetrative sexual activity with minors between 16 to 18 years;
- (f) Introduction of new offence of sexual communication with a minor below 18 years;
- (g) Introduction of new offence of causing a minor below 18 years to look at a sexual image.

23. The Films Act, Penal Code and Undesirable Publications Act also have provisions against obscene films and publications and the sale of obscene books including child pornography. The proposed amendments to the Penal Code would introduce new and dedicated offences relating specifically to “child abuse material” to address the development of technology which has allowed for distribution of such material:

- (a) Use term “child abuse material” instead of “child pornography” to ensure physical abuse is covered in addition to sexual abuse;
- (b) Introduction of new offence to punish the making, distributing, selling, advertising, seeking, accessing and possessing of child abuse material.

24. A new Early Childhood Development Centres Act took effect in Jan 2019. This brought child care centres and kindergartens under the same regulatory framework to ensure consistent and higher quality standards across the preschool sector.

Judicial proceedings

25. Singapore introduced the Criminal Justice Reform Act in 2018, which enhanced protection for children in the criminal justice process.

- (a) Video-recorded interviews may be used for victims in child abuse cases, which are admissible as evidence in court in place of the victims’ evidence-in-chief. This minimises the need for the victims to repeatedly recount their ordeal;
- (b) Identity of child abuse victims will be protected from publication even before court proceedings commence;
- (c) During court proceedings, the testimony of child abuse victims will be heard behind closed doors unless the victim elects otherwise;
- (d) During court proceedings, child abuse victims may give testimony behind a physical screen to separate them from the accused person. This adds on to the existing option of giving evidence by video-link from outside the courtroom;
- (e) During court proceedings, the Defence will not be allowed to ask child abuse victims questions about their appearance or sexual history not relating to the charge or accused person unless the court gives permission.

26. The Guardianship of Infants Act states that the welfare of the infant is the paramount consideration in all court proceedings relating to the custody, upbringing of an infant, and the administration of any property to be held in trust for the infant.

27. As stated in paragraph 18 of Singapore’s 4th and 5th Periodic Report, we have enacted the Family Justice Act to set up the Family Justice Courts (FJC) to effectively resolve family disputes and protect the best interests of affected children. Our judicial setup

seeks to promote the best interests of the child as well as ensure proceedings are child-friendly.

(a) Best interests of the child are paramount. The CYPA requires the court to consider the welfare of the child concerned, whether victim or offender. Welfare officers prepare a social report with information that may enable the court to protect the best interests of the child;

- The FJC may appoint a Child Representative to ensure that the child's best interests are the focus of any decision relating to the child. The Child Representative spends time with the child to understand his viewpoint. He may seek reports from teachers, counsellors or other professionals in contact with the child. The Child Representative may arrange a conference with the parents to discuss issues relating to the child. The CHILD or "Children's Best Interests, Less Adversarial" Programme provides for the resolution of custody disputes to focus on the needs of the child. Couples who have children and who intend to divorce are required to attend mediation and/or counselling to address child-related issues, as well as attempt to come to an agreement on what is in the best interests of the children;
- The Youth Court judge when determining the method of dealing with a CYP may also sit with 2 advisers from a PoA nominated by the President. The role of the PoA is to inform and advise the Youth Court with respect to any matter, consideration, that may affect the treatment of the CYP. This ensures that the orders made are in the CYP's best interest.

(b) Judicial proceedings are child friendly. We allow affidavits during Youth Court hearings to avoid subjecting the child to cross-examination. The Court can withhold information from persons if disclosure is assessed to be detrimental to the child. The use of video-recording as evidence for Court proceedings is also being considered via an amendment to the CYPA;

(c) Views of the child are sought. There are protocols to ensure that government officers have sought the views of the child and the family. If there are doubts, the judge may redirect officers to address specific issues. The judge may also speak to the child involved to ascertain his wishes.

28. A high-level Committee has been formed to Review and Enhance Reforms in the Family Justice System (RERF). The RERF Committee is co-chaired by top decision makers – the Presiding Judge of the FJC Debbie Ong, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Law Ng How Yue and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social and Family Development Chew Hock Yong. It aims to strengthen the family justice system by incorporating elements of therapeutic and restorative justice in the resolution of family disputes.

29. The areas of focus include upstream interventions to help parents understand the impact of divorces on children, facilitated access to relevant information to enable parties to make informed decisions, and more amicable and sustainable resolutions, for the benefit of the child. The RERF Committee is expected to release its recommendations in 2019.

Police investigations

30. During police investigations, we ensure practices are child-sensitive. We deploy officers trained in child-sensitive interviewing techniques and have reduced the number of interviews required.

Use of corporal punishment

31. Corporal punishment is only conducted as a last resort with strict regulations, guidelines and procedures. Caning is the only form of corporal punishment allowed and can only be carried out on males in penal institutions, CYP Homes, and schools. Please see paragraphs 69 to 71 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report on our practices and safeguards regarding caning.

In penal institutions

32. Legislative safeguards ensure that corporal punishment is only permitted for very serious offences, which generally result in physical harm to victims. Only the High Court may sentence a juvenile to judicial caning. For criminal cases tried in the High Court from 2005 to 2009, there were no instances where caning was imposed on juvenile offenders. Under the Criminal Procedure Code, males between the ages of 7 and 16 years can only be caned with a lighter rod different from that used for adults, for not more than 10 strokes per execution. A full inquiry is also conducted before any caning is administered. The Institutional Discipline Advisory Committees are appointed by the Minister for Home Affairs to render an opinion to the Commissioner of Prisons on whether the corporal punishment ordered by a Superintendent on any inmate for committing an institutional offence is excessive.

33. Administrative safeguards are in place. Caning may be used only if a medical officer is present and certifies that the offender is in a fit state of health to undergo caning. If, during the process of caning, the medical officer certifies that the offender is no longer in a fit state of health to undergo caning, the caning must be stopped.

In CYP homes

34. Legislative safeguards are enshrined in the CYP regulations to restrict corporal punishment. Regulations require that caning is only carried out after an inquiry, where the Head of the facility must be satisfied that the resident is guilty of serious misconduct, that the resident's actions warrant corporal punishment, and that no other alternative is suitable. Caning is done in private and witnessed by another staff, and necessary medical examination and care pre- and post-caning, will be provided.

In Schools

35. Maintaining discipline in schools is integral to the education process. For students who have erred in their behaviour, schools are encouraged to guide them towards the right direction and to take responsibility for their behaviour. This would be more effective than any form of punishment, especially when the students themselves identify the consequences. The Ministry of Education (MOE) provides schools with resources such as the Discipline Framework that outlines this approach which schools can adopt to correct misbehaviour.

In homes

36. We respect the rights and role of parents in caring for and disciplining their children. However, we also seek to educate parents on alternative forms of discipline through parenting programmes and public education efforts. Please see paragraph 72 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report for our public education efforts on alternative discipline methods.

37. Positive parenting is enforced through FamilyMatters!, an initiative to support the family at all life stages. A wide range of programmes is offered in schools and in the community to equip parents with effective parenting skills. Programmes on discipline and conflict management promote more positive and acceptable ways for disciplining children, such as withdrawing privileges and time-out techniques.

Question 7**Respect for the views of the child**

38. The right to freedom of speech and expression is a constitutionally protected right for all Singaporeans, including children. The Government seeks views, in particular on policy and legislative changes, via REACH, and children can access this online consultation portal to provide their views on policy and legislative changes that are of interest to them.

Child-specific platforms

39. Children are regularly consulted on issues that affect them. Please see paragraph 46 of Singapore's 4th and 5th Periodic Report on our consultations with children.

40. Regular Ministerial dialogue sessions by MOE provide students a platform to express their views on social and national issues. The aim is two-fold: (1) to amplify children's voices and representation in key political and social issues; and (2) for the government to hear from them on national policies. The annual Pre-University Seminar brings together students from junior colleges, Centralised Institutes, Polytechnics, Integrated Programme schools, senior public sector officials and private sector executives to discuss the concerns of children.⁶

41. The Ministry of Culture Community and Youth (MCCY) and the National Youth Council (NYC) work with youth sector partners to create conversational platforms in online and offline spaces. The aim is to give youth a voice on issues of national concern, an avenue to hear diverse perspectives, and a chance to co-create solutions with peers and the government. The Youth Conversations initiative reached over 8,000 youths in 2018, on important topics such as youth aspirations, social inclusivity, and environmental sustainability.

42. Children are given opportunities to express views and participate in decision-making forums at the regional and international levels. Please see paragraph 47 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report.

In schools

43. Singapore's education system respects the right of the child to be heard and encourages our children to express their views. MOE's 21st Century Competencies framework lists the desired outcomes of education as ensuring each student is a:

(a) Confident Person, who has a strong sense of right and wrong, is adaptable and resilient, knows himself, is discerning in judgement, thinks independently and critically, and communicates effectively;

(b) Self-Directed Learner, who questions, reflects, perseveres and takes responsibility for his own learning;

(c) Active Contributor, who works effectively in teams, is innovative, exercises initiative, takes calculated risks and strives for excellence;

(d) Concerned Citizen, who is rooted to Singapore, has a strong sense of civic responsibility, is informed about Singapore and the world, and takes an active part in bettering the lives of others.

44. To translate the framework and develop the desired competencies in practice, schools have suggestion schemes, dialogues, journal writing and forums for students to express their views. Secondary, post-secondary and tertiary students vote in student council elections to elect student councillors to represent them. The students' involvement in setting school rules or designing school uniforms fosters a sense of ownership and belonging to the school.

45. Schools conduct Applied Learning Programmes such as Journalism and Broadcasting to nurture confident communicators. Students hone their oratorical and writing skills by producing podcasts, running their own news blogs and campus radio stations.

⁶ The theme and approach of the Pre-University Seminar 2018 was #TransformingOurSG. The theme focusses on the need for young Singaporeans to cherish the strong foundations they have inherited while re-evaluating established assumptions and practices and exploring novel ideas and approaches to transform Singapore for the future.

In families

46. Singapore recognises the importance of building strong and resilient families. As stated in paragraph 94 of Singapore's 4th and 5th Periodic Report, the Government works closely with partners such as the Families for Life Council and the Centre for Fathering (CFF) to promote family bonding and positive parenting. Such initiatives include the annual Families for Life Celebrations (FFLC), a large scale family bonding event which brings extended family members together to spend family time and Parents Learn And Play (P.L.A.Y.), which equips parents with parenting tips and importantly, remind parents that engaging their children in 'play', ie building strong bonds, is key to guiding them through their formative years.

47. The Government also works closely with the CFF on the Dads for Life movement which aims to inspire and encourage fathers to play an active role in parenting and nurturing their children – a role which has traditionally been associated with mothers. For example, CFF has been organising workshops like 'Beginning Parenting Programme' for over 10 years, to equip new fathers with the confidence and skills to manage their new roles and embrace greater parenting responsibilities.

48. Singapore supports families and children through FamilyMatters!, a movement to provide greater support for family life education programmes. FamilyMatters@Community offers a variety of skills-based and lifestage-appropriate family education programmes at community touchpoints to assist families in specific challenging aspects of family life. The aim is to empower individuals and families with knowledge and skills to enrich and strengthen family life and promote positive mindsets and attitudes towards family and children. FamilyMatters@School also helps equip parents with the skills to better connect with their children, to build a strong and happy family, by making evidence-based and evidence-informed parenting programmes available to all primary and secondary schools in Singapore. The schools work in close partnership with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) and other partners to encourage parents to participate and to refer them to follow-on support, if needed.

Question 8

Children deprived of a family environment

BPC review outcome

49. The BPC programme is an intervention programme for CYPs who display at-risk behaviours and are in need of care, rehabilitation, supervision and/or protection with an emphasis on family involvement. The BPC programme is guided by the following key principles:

- (a) Upstream preventive efforts are critical;
- (b) Child-centred support is important;
- (c) Parental responsibility and involvement are crucial; and
- (d) Community support is a priority and the application for BPC should be seen as a last resort.

50. A multi-agency committee was convened in 2013 to review the BPC Programme. The Committee comprised representatives from the Government (MSF), the Judiciary (the State Courts, previously called the Subordinate Courts), and Civil Society (MCYC Community Services Society, the Salvation Army, and SCS).

51. Various stakeholders including CYP Homes and CYPs undergoing the BPC Programme were consulted. The review was completed in 2014.

52. The review found the programme helped CYPs improve their relationships with their parents, stay away from undesirable activities and handle social relationships better. Some of the best practices identified included:

(a) The collaborative approach taken in supporting the CYPs. In general, the CYP Homes adopted a multi-disciplinary approach in supporting the CYP. CYP Homes collaborated with other professionals such as relevant MSF officers, school counsellors, Medical Social Workers and social workers from Family Service Centres to work closely with clients' family/significant others;

(b) Facilitated Admission to CYP Homes. To ease the transition for the CYP to a residential home setting, most CYP Homes had an induction programme for CYPs and parents. It was also a common practice for a social contract to be made between clients, parents, and the CYP Homes. Some CYP Homes also implemented a buddy-system. The buddy would help orientate a new CYP to the CYP Homes and facilitated introductions to staff and other CYPs. All CYP Homes ensured the CYPs were meaningfully engaged as soon as possible in schools or alternative schooling/vocational training if mainstream schooling was not an option;

(c) Regular internal case review. Case reviews were conducted every three months as well as after any critical incident or significant development involving the client. These reviews involved the Head of CYP Homes, operational staff, caseworker and relevant professionals and included discussions on the progress of the child in the CYP Homes, school and family.

53. Some of the recommendations made by the review are listed below. Recommendations (a), (b), and (c) have been incorporated as proposed CYPA amendments and are presently undergoing public consultation:

(a) Amending the terminology in the CYPA to be more child-centric, to stress the role of families in the rehabilitation process;

(b) Emphasising the role and involvement of parents in the CYP's rehabilitation by including an intervention plan that states the risks and needs of the CYP and the proposed activities and programmes which the parents/guardians should attend with the CYP;

(c) Encouraging family- and community-based care for the CYP, such as with a relative or some other person appointed for the purpose by the Court (e.g. close family friend) or at a licensed CYP Home;

(d) Use upstream preventive efforts such as school outreach to parents through the FamilyMatters@School programmes to emphasise effective parenting, strengthen parent-child relationships and manage disciplinary issues in an appropriate manner. Singapore has begun engaging partners to review community-based programmes.

Promotion of family-based care

54. Singapore has strengthened family-based care and community support for vulnerable children. Kinship and foster care are preferred options for children who are unable to remain safely with their natural families. We have increased the proportion of children placed in foster care as compared to residential care, and are continuing our work in this direction. To expand Singapore's fostering capacity and build foster care capability within the community, MSF appointed a number of NGOs as Fostering Agencies (FAs). The FAs support foster parents to better care for foster children and broaden foster family outreach and recruitment efforts.

55. To support children at risk of being removed from their families, and to reunify children in foster or residential care with their families, we established the Safe and Strong Families (SSF) pilot in 2017. Please see paragraph 91 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report on our SSF pilot.

Question 9

Children with disabilities

Support systems and services in mainstream schools

56. All Singaporean children of compulsory school age, including those with physical, intellectual or developmental disabilities are required to regularly attend national schools,⁷ unless they apply for and are granted exemption separately. This has begun with the 2019 Primary One cohort. We are committed to providing quality education for each student through appropriate and relevant programmes and initiatives, including an emphasis on professional development across all schools.

57. There are resources for children with special educational needs in mainstream primary schools, such as the School-based Dyslexia Remediation programme for children who may need support in literacy and numeracy. Children with dyslexia may also enrol in the MOE-Aided literacy remediation programme at the Dyslexia Association of Singapore, where they may qualify for subsidised fees.

58. Mainstream schools are able to support children with mild Autism Spectrum Disorders with the assistance of teachers trained in Special Needs and Allied Educators (Learning and Behavioural Support). To help children with emotional, social and/or behavioural difficulties and disorders, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders, schools work closely with Response Early Intervention and Assessment in Community Mental Health services and parents on suitable school-based interventions and support.

59. Children with visual impairment, hearing loss and/or physical impairment may tap on itinerant educational support services, where personnel from NGOs such as Asian Women's Welfare Association and Singapore Association for the Deaf, provide additional support in school to enhance the child's accessibility to learning and the environment. MOE also provides assistive technology, such as Frequency Modulation systems, magnifiers, and text-to-speech software, for the children's use. To support children with moderate to profound hearing loss or visual impairment but are able to follow the mainstream curriculum, designated mainstream schools provide specialised support, such as resource teachers who are trained to teach children with these special needs.

60. Special Education (SPED) schools cater for children with severe disabilities and require specialised support. They are well-equipped with facilities such as hydrotherapy pools, sensory-integration rooms and special rooms for therapy and vocational training. Since 2010, all 20 SPED schools have adopted the Quality Assurance Framework⁸ which guides service improvement.

61. To promote inclusivity, MOE has started satellite partnerships with mainstream schools to provide opportunities for social and academic integration between SPED and mainstream students. As at Nov 2018, 16 SPED schools have established partnerships with 19 mainstream schools.

Policies and programmes under the Enabling Masterplan

62. Currently, children under the age of 7 with developmental needs can receive intervention through Government-funded Early Intervention (EI) programmes. Children with mild developmental needs are supported by the Development Support (DS) and Learning Support (LS) programmes, in a preschool setting. In 2018, 550 preschool centres offered DS-LS, up from 350 in 2016. For children with moderate to severe developmental needs, they are supported through the Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children (EIPIC), provided at EI centres. These children receive the same model of EIPIC

⁷ Including government-funded special education schools.

⁸ Key areas include leadership, resource management, family and community partnerships, and teaching and learning processes and outcomes. Periodic reviews ensure effectiveness of the framework.

intervention across different ages and needs. In 2017, EIPIC benefitted over 3,000 children across 21 centres.

63. Singapore will enhance support for children with developmental needs, building on the efforts of the Third Enabling Masterplan.⁹ Families of children with developmental needs can look forward to more customised and affordable EI services to maximise their children's potential. These enhancements are expected to benefit at least 4,500 children and their families each year. The Government will invest around S\$60 million a year – a 30% increase from \$45 million today – to provide two new EI programmes, and to make fees for EI services much more affordable.

64. From July 2019, EI centres will move away from the one-size-fits-all EIPIC model. Instead, they will offer enhanced EI programmes that are better tailored to the varied needs of children as they develop over time. Two new programmes will be introduced:

(a) **EIPIC Under-2s:** Under the new EIPIC Under-2s programme, all children under two years old enrolled in EIPIC will receive more targeted intervention. Unlike the existing EIPIC programme, the EIPIC Under-2s programme requires children to be accompanied by their parents/caregivers, who will receive training to carry out intervention strategies in the child's daily routines at home. Such strategies embed learning opportunities throughout the children's daily lives, and lead to more sustainable outcomes. At the age of two, the children will transit to the EIPIC@Centre programme;

(b) **DS-Plus:** Children who have made sufficient progress under EIPIC@Centre can now transit to receiving intervention in a preschool setting under a new Development Support Plus (DS-Plus) programme. Currently, they receive continued intervention at their EI centre until they graduate to primary school. EI professionals from the EI centre will work with the child in his/her preschool up to twice a week, co-teaching the child alongside the preschool teacher. This helps the child to adapt to the mainstream preschool setting, so that he/she can be equipped with skills within a larger class setting.

65. To make EI services more affordable for families of children with developmental needs, the Government will enhance EI subsidies and broaden the income criteria for means-tested subsidies so that more families qualify. As a result, out-of-pocket expenses for EI services will be lowered across all EI programmes for most income groups from 1 April 2019, with reductions averaging between 30% to 70%, depending on the EI programme.

66. We are enabling our medical practitioners to better help children with disabilities. We have a General Practitioner (GP) training slated for end-2019 which will focus on childhood intellectual disabilities. A set of guidelines, when completed in 2019, will aid primary care practitioners in making the right referrals for children with various developmental conditions. We have also made available a Disability Resource List onto Agency for Integrated Care's (AIC) Primary Care Pages, an online portal for GPs. This resource list contains the various schemes and services available to Persons with Disabilities, including children.

Question 10

Provision of quality education and adolescent health

Compulsory Education

67. Singapore has instituted compulsory education¹⁰ to provide young Singaporeans with a foundation for life-long learning, and to enhance national identity and social cohesion through a common educational experience in national schools.

⁹ The Third Enabling Masterplan is a set of recommendations developed through a partnership between the people, public and private sectors, for Singapore to build a more inclusive society where persons with disabilities are empowered and enabled to realise their true potential.

¹⁰ In Singapore's context, compulsory education is defined as education in national schools.

68. While non-citizen children are exempt from compulsory education, they have access to education in Singapore. We respect the non-citizen children's right to choose to attend a non-national school. They can attend national schools but many parents choose to enrol their non-citizen children in international schools. Those who prefer national schools do so with the payment of school fees, and are extended the same quality education and learning as Singaporean children.

School stress

69. We have taken steps to reduce excessive stress in our education system. Please see paragraph 154 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report on the revamp of the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) national examination and Secondary 1 posting. We have also revamped of the scoring system. We no longer name top scorers nor rank schools, and we have reduced curriculum content and requested teachers not to over-test. To reduce competitiveness, students' performances in the PSLE national examination and Secondary 1 posting will no longer be ranked against their peers. The new scoring system will also facilitate better matching of secondary schools to fit the child's interests and learning needs.

70. In moving away from an over-emphasis on academic results, we have adjusted school-based assessments structures at the Primary and Secondary levels from 2019:

(a) Reduced the number of school-based assessments. Currently there are no semestral examinations for Primary 1 and no mid-year examinations (MYE) for Primary 2. From 2019, all weighted assessments and examinations for Primary 1 and 2 students will be removed, and assessments conducted will not be counted to form any overall mark or grade. This includes removing the year-end examination at Primary 2. Primary 3 and 5, and Secondary 1 and 3 are transition years, during which students are exposed to new subjects and/or higher content rigour and expectations. To provide them adequate time and space to adjust to these curriculum demands, we will be removing the MYE for these levels over the next three years (2019–2021);

(b) Refreshed the Holistic Development Profile (HDP).¹¹ From 2019, the HDP will no longer present academic indicators such as class and level position of the students. This enables students to focus on his learning progress, and discourage excessive peer comparisons. Where marks are used to report students' learning, these will be rounded off and presented as whole numbers, without decimal points;

(c) Revised the criteria of academic awards for lower Primary. The selection for academic awards at these levels will no longer be based on academic scores, but will be adjusted to recognise positive learning orientations such as diligence, curiosity, collaboration and enthusiasm in daily lessons and learning activities.

71. Our schools provide a holistic education in both academic and non-academic areas. Please see paragraph 155 of our 4th and 5th periodic report for our Direct Schools Admissions Exercise, Discretionary Admissions, and co-curricular activities.

72. We recognise the importance of social and emotional learning. Schools teach self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management and decision making. These skills would help them cope with stress and future challenges. We have established peer support structures in mainstream schools and institutes of higher learning. Through these programmes, students are equipped with peer helping skills and resources to look out for their peers in distress and make timely referrals to adults or professionals for further support.

73. Emphasis is placed on early identification and timely support for students who are in distress. Teachers are trained to detect signs of distress and to provide basic counselling. Students who need further support are seen by counselling personnel in schools. MOE has made provision for two specially appointed Teacher Counsellors (TC) in every primary school and junior college/centralised institute and four TCs in every secondary school. These TCs are trained in counselling skills, special areas such as suicide intervention and counselling for grief and loss, and management of behaviour in emergency situations.

¹¹ Also known as a "report book".

Schools also have Allied Educators (Counselling) who work closely with the school management in planning and implementing a school-wide counselling system, providing direct counselling intervention to at-risk students, case consultations to school personnel and parents, and training teachers and parents on counselling-related issues.

74. Education and Career Guidance Counsellors help students in MOE schools, polytechnics or the Institute of Technical education explore their strengths and interests, in line with their aspirations. The counsellors guide students and their parents in planning and making informed decisions. With better education, career and pastoral guidance, students feel more confident in making considered decisions and take positive steps to embark on their education and career pathways.

75. Schools are alert during periods of high stress, for example, during national examinations and the release of national examination results. Students believed to be having difficulty managing stress are referred for timely counselling. Schools provide students with workshops and talks to help them manage stress and time. Schools are provided with various resources to promote mental health amongst their students.

76. Schools may refer students with more severe problems for professional consultation. If the need arises, these specialists enlist the help of agencies like the Child Guidance Clinic of the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), where appropriate.

Child suicides

77. Every suicide is one too many. Singapore endeavours to prevent them whenever possible. Local studies found that common reasons for teen suicides in Singapore are interpersonal relationships, family issues and social stressors.

78. As cases of suicide are often complex and multi-faceted, a whole-of-Government approach works better. Several agencies like the Ministry of Health (MOH), IMH, MOE and MSF work in partnership to build mental resilience in youths, through an interagency collaboration such as National Mental Health Blueprint and NurtureSG, which sought to enhance health outcomes among our children and youth. Please see paragraph 125 of our 4th and 5th periodic report on NurtureSG.

Mental health in schools

79. In addition to the avenues to seek help in schools described in paragraphs 72 to 76 above, the children can be referred by the school counsellors to the Response, Early Intervention, Assessment in Community Mental Health programme. This programme consists of multi-disciplinary teams of mental health professionals who collaborate closely with school counsellors to provide students with psychological, emotional and behavioural problems, with suitable school-based interventions, such as anger and anxiety management, coping skills and social skills group programmes.

80. Children facing emotional or behavioural problems may also seek consultation at the two Child Guidance Clinics run by IMH.

81. Working with the family is an integral part of our strategy to support our students' mental well-being. We believe that youths have good mental health when they lead balanced lives and have trusted adults who understand and support them. Therefore, schools work with parents and the community to provide a network of strong social and emotional support that spans the home, school, and community settings. Relevant social support agencies also provide support for parenting efforts, which include conducting talks and workshops to equip parents with tips and strategies to better support their children's social and emotional development. Resources to help parents build resilient mindsets in children are also available.

Outreach in the community

82. Outside of schools, there is a strong network of healthcare and social service professionals, who are trained to identify and intervene when they encounter a higher-risk individual, such as those with a history of suicidal and self-harm tendencies. Please see paragraphs 131 and 132 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report on public education efforts.

83. For cases of attempted suicide, the priority is to ensure the safety of the person in distress. The Police are thus activated as the first responder to attend to the situation immediately. Police officers will, when they notice signs of suicidal tendencies, recommend the appropriate follow-up including referral to the Samaritans of Singapore for counselling, or engage the next-of-kin to support and care for the person. If there are clear signs indicating possible mental instability, Police may refer the person to the IMH for an assessment of the person's mental state. Where deemed necessary by medical professionals, the person may be warded at IMH for care and treatment to prevent further suicide attempts. As part of our Penal Code review, a recommendation included in the Criminal Law Reform Bill is the decriminalisation of attempted suicide. This is in recognition that persons who attempt suicide should be provided help rather than penalised.

84. To support children in Singapore, the Community Health Assessment Team (CHAT) operates the CHAT hub, a mental health wellness centre for young people between 16 and 30 years old. CHAT aims to reach out to young people to raise awareness of mental health conditions, and provide avenues and information for help-seeking. CHAT also maintains an online portal, where young people can access resources on mental health, or make appointments for mental health assessments. CHAT is also piloting a webCHAT service in Singapore, where a team of mental healthcare professionals connect with young people via web chat, to understand their stressors and share appropriate support services available.

85. In paragraph 125 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report, we reported on the Inter-Ministry Taskforce NurtureSG which was formed in 2016 to strengthen our efforts to enhance the health of our children and youth. The following have been done as part of the Action Plan which was based on NurtureSG's recommendation:

(a) MOE and Health Promotion Board (HPB) are continuing to strengthen peer support efforts in mainstream schools and Institutes of Higher Learning by providing resources and training for students;

(b) HPB is continuing to train and equip preschool teachers with the knowledge and skills to build social-emotional competencies in young children;

(c) Inter-agency research workgroup chaired by IMH, with representatives from various agencies to study suicides, suicidal and self-harm behaviours in children and youth has begun its work.

86. Together with stakeholders in relevant public sector agencies, the research Workgroup will:

(a) Identify risks and protective factors that influence such behaviours, as well as additional areas for further study; and

(b) Make recommendations to further improve the current framework of support for troubled children and youths.

Question 11

Sale, trafficking and abduction

Child victims of trafficking

Domestic legislation and international commitments

87. Singapore is committed to combatting trafficking at the domestic, regional and international level. Our efforts are effective – very few children are trafficked into Singapore. The single child victim in 2017 was swiftly rendered assistance. Please see paragraphs 186 to 195 of our 4th and 5th periodic report for our protection for children from trafficking.

88. We have robust legislation to protect children from trafficking. In addition to the PHTA (please see paragraph 189 of our 4th and 5th periodic report), the CYPA prohibits

the unlawful transfer, possession, custody or control of a child, and imposes penalties for the sexual exploitation of CYPs in Singapore. The CYPA also provides for the imposition of imprisonment and/or a fine for persons who abuse and neglect CYPs.

89. The Penal Code protects all persons below the age of 18 years from being exploited for commercial sex. The Penal Code has been amended to cover non-penetrative sexual activity. The offence will continue to have extra-territorial application, to commercial sex offences against minors committed by Singaporeans overseas. The Penal Code has also been amended to provide for new offences of sexual communication with minors, and to amend the current offence of sexual grooming to allow authorities to intervene upstream to curb predatory behaviour, and to prevent sexual grooming of minors.

90. We have made progress in the accession and ratification of international conventions. Please see paragraph 187 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report.

National strategies and agencies involved

91. Please see paragraphs 187 and 188 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report on the National Plan of Action and National Approach to combat trafficking.

92. The Police has a dedicated unit that looks into vice issues. In addition to the capability building detailed in paragraph 192 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report, our police officers are also trained in interview techniques. Translators are present during interviews with foreign sex workers. Interviews and screenings allow officers to identify information on potential sex trafficking activities or syndicates involved in such trafficking activities.

Management of victims

93. The PHTA mandates the provision of shelter, food and counselling and avails other support measures customised to victims' needs. Please see paragraph 190 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report for assistance provided to trafficked victims.

94. Unlike adult victims who may be better able to care for themselves (e.g. have friends who may offer them a place to stay), child victims are more vulnerable and require better support to meet their needs. The CYPA provides for child victims of trafficking to be placed in shelters for their safety. Victims are cared for in Government-funded and NGO facilities where a full range of services including medical, counselling, translation, and accommodation/shelter is provided. We place them in shelters where their safety can be ensured, and provide them with specialised therapeutic programmes and psychological support.

95. We respect the right of children to privacy at all stages of the proceedings. Please see paragraph 191 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report on protection of victims' confidentiality.

Foreign bride trade

96. Singapore has not encountered cases of foreign brides being trafficked to date. In situations where sex trafficking of a foreign bride is detected, the Police will investigate in accordance with the processes relating to trafficking.

Question 12

Children in conflict with the law

Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (MACR)

97. Singapore intends to raise the MACR from 7 to 10 years of age via amendments to the Penal Code through the Criminal Law Reform Bill in 2019.

98. Singapore recognises that the offending behaviour of a very young child needs to be addressed from two perspectives. Firstly, it is in the interest of the child to guide them away from such conduct in the future. Furthermore, where the offending behaviour has caused

serious harm, there is a need to safeguard public safety. On balance, we take the view that the appropriate MACR in Singapore should be 10, as:

(a) Studies have shown that a 10-year-old is generally able to appreciate the importance of law and order concerns, although there is no scientific consensus on when a child is mature enough to appreciate right and wrong and/or the natural consequences of their actions;

(b) From a community-protection perspective, conferring immunity from criminal liability on 7 to 9-year-olds would not present a significant risk in Singapore, as the number of children arrested from this age-group is small. There is however, a marked increase in the number of juveniles arrested from age 10 onwards, and there is therefore a need to have a means to intervene via the criminal justice system for these young offenders;

(c) There are ample examples of other countries which have the MACR of 10 (e.g. England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Hong Kong).

99. Singapore will also review its measures to support children with offending behaviour who are either below the MACR, or who are above 10 years of age and under 12 and found to not have attained sufficient maturity or understanding without resorting to criminal proceedings.

Use of solitary confinement, corporal punishment

Corporal punishment

100. See paragraphs 31 to 37 above on how Singapore manages the use of corporal punishment.

Solitary confinement

101. In penal institutions, solitary confinement is utilised as a form of punishment for breaches of discipline, or to ensure the safety of the individual or other residents in the facility. If such a measure is imposed, there are proper checks to ensure adequate protection of the individual offender, including the limitation of solitary confinement durations of up to a maximum of 7 days, and medical checks prior to and after the confinement. Under the Prisons Regulations, such confinement shall not exceed an aggregate of more than 90 days in a year for any one prisoner, and the execution of any 2 consecutive sentences shall be separated by a period not shorter than the longer of such sentences. No prisoner shall be punished until he has had an opportunity of hearing the charges and evidence against him and of making his defence. While in a punishment cell, no prisoner shall be deprived of medical care.

102. In CYP Homes, safeguards are legislated via the CYP regulations to restrict the use of solitary confinement. Residents who have committed institutional infringements such as causing hurt to others, may be placed in segregation rooms as a form of consequence. While residents are in the segregation rooms, their well-being is closely monitored by staff. Residents continue to have access to medical care and meet with psychologists and case-workers to counsel them on their behaviour. They do not participate in communal activities. Segregation duration is limited to 7 days.

Life imprisonment

103. Singapore's policies are consistent with Article 37(a) of the CRC. Please see paragraphs 214 to 216 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report on life imprisonment.

104. For extremely serious offences punishable with either life imprisonment or the death penalty, offenders under the age of 18 may only be sentenced to life imprisonment under the Criminal Procedure Code. These are the most serious offences in Singapore, including murder or culpable homicide, kidnapping and the unlawful use of firearms. He may have his case reviewed with the possibility of release, after serving a minimum of 20 years of the prison sentence. The Life Imprisonment Review Board, appointed by the Minister for Home Affairs, will assess the person's suitability for release and make a recommendation to the Minister for Home Affairs.

Juvenile justice system

105. The Singapore youth justice system emphasises early identification and intervention for optimal rehabilitation. Where an offence has been committed, youth offenders are diverted from the justice system where possible. Please see paragraphs 202 to 207 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report on our juvenile justice system.

106. As part of our CYPA review, where the proposals are presently undergoing public consultation, we have also proposed raising the age limit of youth offenders to below 18. This will enable us to intervene for more cases and provide more flexibility in rehabilitation options for youth offenders.

Question 13**Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in Armed Conflict (OPAC)**

107. Singapore has not experienced armed conflict since its independence in 1965. No child has been recruited and used in hostilities by armed groups, or placed in demobilisation and reintegration programmes, and none have been charged with war crimes. The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) has not encountered child victims of practices prohibited by the OPAC among the refugee and asylum-seeking children during our overseas deployments, training and operations such as UN peacekeeping operations.

Voluntary enlistment

108. Please see paragraphs 231 to 233 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report on voluntary enlistment. Only a small number of servicemen are enlisted under the Voluntary Early Enlistment Scheme (VEES). We do not provide incentives to encourage voluntary early enlistment. There is also no evidence to suggest that our children are enrolling in military service due to poverty and domestic violence, and there is sufficient community support available for these children to ameliorate their circumstances. The Terms and Conditions for voluntary early enlistment are explained clearly to interested applicants on the application form given to them. More pertinently, members of the SAF under 18 years do not take part in hostilities.

109. The other policies and practices of the SAF also meet our obligations under the OPAC. Some examples of our practices include not deploying persons below 18 years on peacekeeping missions abroad, disseminating the obligations of the OPAC to the relevant departments of Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) and the SAF, and the requirement of SAF personnel deployed to international peacekeeping missions to undergo pre-deployment training on human rights, Law of Armed Conflict, protection of civilians, gender awareness and Rules of Engagement to ensure that they conduct themselves responsibly during their mission.

Complaint mechanism

110. Please see paragraphs 224 to 228 of our 4th and 5th periodic report on complaint mechanisms.

111. To ensure that our servicemen have sufficient support when facing grievances or if they wish to seek redress, we have multiple avenues for our servicemen to provide feedback, complaints and seek redress, all of which apply equally to early enlistees below 18 years. This information is displayed on the MINDEF website so that servicemen, including early enlistees below the 18 years, can refer to it even prior to enlistment. Servicemen are briefed on these multiple channels during enlistment, and the procedures for seeking redress are set out in the General Orders of the Ministry of Defence.

112. The SAF has established procedures for servicemen to seek redress through the chain of command. If the serviceman is dissatisfied with the action taken by his commanders, he can raise the issue in writing to the Armed Forces Council, which is chaired by the Minister for Defence. In addition, there is a confidential disclosure mechanism where disclosures are surfaced to senior MINDEF officials outside the chain of

command. All disclosures are treated with utmost confidence and every effort is made not to reveal the identity of the discloser, to the extent feasible and permissible under the law.

113. Servicemen and their family members may also call the SAF Counselling Centre's 24-hour hotline to discuss their concerns regarding issues pertaining to National Service. All calls are kept confidential and callers can choose to remain anonymous.

Domestic legal system and legislative safeguards

114. Singapore implements our obligations under the OPAC through two pieces of domestic legislation, namely the Singapore Armed Forces (Volunteers) Regulations and the Enlistment Regulations. Any person may report violations of his/her rights under OPAC to the Singapore Courts by citing the relevant provision in the legislation implementing the OPAC. In particular, the penalty for contravening the Enlistment Regulations is a sufficient deterrent to prevent conscription of children below the age of 16 years and 6 months, or the involvement of enlistees in direct hostilities. There have been no prosecutions made under the Enlistment Regulations to date.

115. Please see paragraphs 238 and 239 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report.

Arms export and military assistance

116. Please see paragraphs 242 and 243 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report. Singapore maintains a strong export control systems regime to curb illicit arms trade and indiscriminate use of conventional ammunitions and small arms and light weapons. Singapore is a consistent supporter of global efforts against illicit arms transfer and the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines, cluster munitions and conventional weapons, such as the UN Programme of Action and the Arms Trade Treaty. We have in place indefinite moratoriums on the export of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions.

Part II

Question 14

Update on legislation, institutions, policies, programmes, and ratification of human rights instruments

Legislation

117. The Criminal Justice Reform Act was enacted in 2018. Please see paragraph 25 above where we have updated on the legislation. We are also currently reviewing the CYP A and Penal Code. Please refer to paragraphs 21 to 23 above. A new Early Childhood Development Centres Act also took effect from Jan 2019. Please refer to paragraph 24 above.

Programmes and policies

Child victims of violence

118. Singapore ensures that our measures to deal with sexual violence are victim-centric. All police officers are trained to handle victims of crime in general, as part of their basic police training. Officers are sensitised to the vulnerabilities of sexual crime victims and taught to handle victims of crimes with care. This includes attending briefings facilitated by members of the regional Family Violence Working Groups that teach officers basic victim care principles. Police officers are also trained to adopt appropriate techniques when interviewing victims of sexual crimes.

119. There have been developments in police investigation practice, such as the use of a one-stop forensic examination centre (OneSAFE), multi-disciplinary interviews, and enhanced training in victim empathy and minimisation of victim trauma.

120. The multi-disciplinary interviews minimise trauma for child abuse victims as separate interviews conducted by various parties including the police, child protection officers and doctors are integrated into a single interview coordinated by the police. This reduces the need for victims to recount their traumatic experiences repeatedly and preserves the accuracy of their testimonies.

Appropriate Adult Scheme for Young Suspects

121. We have in place the Appropriate Adults (AA) scheme to provide emotional support to young suspects interviewed by law enforcement agencies, by accompanying young suspects during those interviews. This was reported in paragraphs 198 and 212 of our 4th and 5th Periodic Report. While this scheme has been implemented in phases, it will be fully rolled-out in 2019.

122. The Government funds the scheme, while SCS manages the day-to-day operations of the scheme, and is responsible for recruiting, training, and deploying AAs. Volunteers from the Law Society of Singapore and the Association of Criminal Lawyers also support SCS in training AAs.

Early childhood

123. Singapore has made investments in the early childhood sector. We will continue to add 30,000 more full-day preschool places by 2023, up from 170,000 today. Most of this would be provided through government-funded operators. To ensure the affordability of preschool, families receive subsidies, in addition to monthly fee caps that government-funded operators are required to keep to. We will be doubling our annual spending on the preschool sector over five years, to \$1.7 billion by 2023. The Early Childhood Manpower Plan also charts out a comprehensive suite of measures to attract, develop and retain quality early childhood educators.

Human rights instruments

124. Please see paragraph 4 above on our ratification of human rights instruments.

Part III

Data, statistics and other information, if available

Question 15

Table 1

Government Operating Expenditure¹² on Social Development

	2015	2016	2017
Total Government Operating Expenditure (S\$ million)	48 090	52 129	56 098
Total Government Operating Expenditure on Social Development (S\$ million)	26 258	28 939	31 249
Education	11 236	11 812	12 022
Health	7 520	8 199	9 021
National Development	1 332	2 284	3 169
Environment and Water Resources	1 125	1 201	1 260

¹² Operating Expenditure refers to the expenses incurred to maintain Government's operations and other regular activities. Components include expenditure on manpower, other operating expenditure and operating grants to Statutory Boards and other institutions. Figures are based on the Government financial year.

	2015	2016	2017
Culture, Community and Youth	1 795	1 444	1 596
Social and Family Development	2 121	2 389	2 560
Communications and Information	424	456	498
Manpower (Financial Security)	706	1 154	1 124

Table 2
Government Development Expenditure¹³ on Social Development

	2015	2016	2017
Total Government Development Expenditure (S\$ million)	19 357	18 916	17 820
Total Government Development Expenditure on Social Development (S\$ million)	5 034	4 900	5 617
Education	699	657	658
Health	1 413	1 619	1 461
National Development	1 321	1 248	1 199
Environment and Water Resources	567	684	1 553
Culture, Community and Youth	779	507	496
Social and Family Development	111	98	88
Communications and Information	144	88	161
Manpower (Financial Security)	0	0	0

Question 16

Table 3
Enrolment rate for non-citizen children

	2015	2016	2017
Primary schools	Singapore is unable to provide these figures		
Secondary schools			

Table 4
Number of child abuse cases investigated by case type

	2015	2016	2017
Type of abuse			
Physical abuse	263	444	373
Sexual abuse	82	107	181
Neglect ¹⁴	206	322	340
Total	551	873	894

¹³ Development Expenditure refers to the expenses that represent a longer-term investment or result in the formation of a capitalisable asset of the Government. Examples of spending areas are the acquisition of heavy equipment and capitalisable assets, e.g. buildings and roads. Figures are based on the Government financial year.

¹⁴ Child abuse that does not fall under the physical abuse and sexual abuse is categorised under “neglect”. This includes abandonment, emotional abuse and CYP’s own behaviours that places the CYP at risk to self or others.

	2015	2016	2017
Breakdown of child abuse cases investigated by gender			
Male	244	400	409
Female	307	473	485
Total	551	873	894

Table 5
Number of child victims of trafficking

	2015	2016	2017
Female	4	-	-
Male	1	-	1

Question 17

Table 6
Number of children cared for in foster or residential care

	2015	2016	2017
Number of child welfare cases in residential care	680	643	631
Number of children in conflict with the law in residential care	124	97	78
Number of children in foster care	362	430	509

Table 7
Number of children reunited with families

	2015	2016	2017
Children reunited with families	Singapore is unable to provide these figures		
Children adopted	326	387	375

Question 18

Table 8
Number of children with disabilities living with families or in institutions

	2015	2016	2017
Children with disabilities living with families	Approximately 16 500	Approximately 16 500	Approximately 16 500
Children with disabilities living in institutions	50	40	39

Table 9
Number of children with disabilities attending school or are out of school

	2015	2016	2017
Children with disabilities attending school broken down by school type			
Mainstream primary schools	9 720	10 970	12 639
Mainstream secondary schools	8 400	9 170	11 057
Mainstream Junior Colleges/Centralised Institute	380	440	659
Government-funded, NGO-run special schools	5 520	5 610	5 713

	2015	2016	2017
Children with disabilities out of school			
Out of school	Singapore is unable to provide these figures		

Table 10

Number of children with disabilities abandoned by their families

	2015	2016	2017
Number of children with disabilities abandoned by their families	Singapore is unable to provide these figures		

Question 19

Table 11

Number of children in conflict with the law

	2015	2016	2017
Number of children arrested	2 447	2 025	2 014
Number of children in pre-trial detention	Singapore is unable to provide these figures		
Number of children in conflict with the law in secured residential care	223	156	97
Number of children given alternative sanctions to deprivation of liberty			
Placed on a diversionary programme	527	412	422
Placed on a probation order	331	227	196
Total	858	639	618

Question 20

125. Please refer to the updated Annex C of the 4th and 5th Periodic Report.

Question 21

126. Every child is precious and we are committed to giving every child a good start in life, regardless of their family background.

127. We understand that experiences in a child's early years can significantly influence his physical, cognitive, and social development. We have made major investments in the early childhood sector. We will continue to add 30,000 more full-day preschool places by 2023 and have provided subsidies and fee caps to ensure preschool remains affordable. We will also be doubling our annual spending on the preschool sector over five years. We also piloted KidSTART in 2016 to provide upstream support for health, learning and development needs and to create a conducive environment to give vulnerable children from low-income families a good start in life. Our MOE established an inter-agency taskforce UPLIFT – Uplifting Pupils in Life and Inspiring Families Task Force – in 2018 to find ways to strengthen support for under-performing children from disadvantaged families.

128. We have enhanced protection for vulnerable children in our legislation. The raising of the age limit for children in need of care and protection and rehabilitation under the CYPA from 16 to 18 years will enable us to statutorily intervene in more cases. For children who have been removed from their families for their safety, we have also put in place systems to ensure stable, long-term care arrangements can be made for them to reside in a family environment. The changes to the Penal Code will also better protect our children from sexual offences.

129. We have allowed for more flexible rehabilitation options for children who have turned to crime by raising the age of the MACR, revamping our BPC regime, and enabling our CYP Homes to better manage their residents through the CYPA amendments.

130. Every child deserves a good start in life. We are committed to providing our children with a great start, and supporting them throughout their childhood.
